

TANF FRA Pilot

Kentucky Transitional Assistance Program (KTAP) Kentucky Works Program (KWP) Pilot Project

Commonwealth of Kentucky
Cabinet for Health and Family Services
Department for Community Based Services
275 East Main Street
Frankfort, Kentucky 40621
Phone: (502) 564-3703
Fax: (502) 564-6907
Commissioner: Lesa Dennis

Primary Contact: Todd Trapp, Director
Department for Community Based Services
Division of Family Support
275 East Main Street 3E1
Frankfort, Kentucky 40621
Phone: (502) 564-3440
Email: Todd.Trapp@ky.gov

A Proposal in Response to:

TANF Pilot Project Under the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023

September 3, 2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| Introduction | 3 |
| KTAP Modernization | 4 |
| Theory of Change | 6 |
| Family Stability and Well-Being Outcomes | 15 |
| Service Population | 18 |
| Implementation Capacity | 19 |
| Collaborations and Partnerships | 20 |
| FRA Pilot Federal Implementation and Outcomes Study | 23 |

Attachments:

DCBS Letter of Commitment

Introduction

The Department for Community Based Services (DCBS), the agency that administers Kentucky's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)-funded Kentucky Transitional Assistance Program (KTAP) and the associated Kentucky Works Program (KWP), is submitting the following application to be selected as a participant state in the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 pilot opportunity. As a pilot state, DCBS will develop and implement measures to show the well-being of Kentucky families is stronger when their specific needs are met, they are allowed to determine their own path forward, and their accomplishments and outcomes are held up as success for the program, rather than the measure of program success being the state's work participation rate (WPR). The Division of Family Support (DFS) manages the policies and procedures for KTAP and KWP. Currently, all adult work eligible KTAP recipients without an exemption or good cause must participate in the Kentucky Works Program (KWP), a program that requires them to meet work activities ranging from 20-55 hours per week in limited activities. The goal of KWP is to assist work eligible individuals to meet the primary obligation to support their children by obtaining employment and educational training that lead to self-sufficiency. Participants in KWP may receive supportive services as needed for participation, including childcare assistance, transportation payments, assistance with vehicle repairs, and other supportive services discussed in the next section.

Modernization

In 2023, DCBS took steps to modernize the KTAP and KWP programs, after decades of stagnation in income eligibility and payment thresholds that did not meet the reality for families living in poverty. DCBS updated regulations to increase the monthly KTAP benefit amount by 100%, the gross income limit and standards of need by 20% each, the resource limit for the asset test, and the supportive services package available to KWP participants. In addition, the changes improved earned income deductions and exclusions to address the benefit cliff. These steps toward modernization have resulted in a greater reach and program impact, as the statewide caseload has increased significantly from just under ten thousand cases in March 2023 to over fourteen thousand in July 2024, a number which includes twenty-five thousand children.

Figures 1, 2, and 3 below demonstrate these impacts which have resulted in DCBS being able to serve more Kentucky families through KTAP and increased the number of payments and supportive services. Figure 1 displays the total number of cases, children, and adults served by KTAP and the increase since modernization was implemented. Figure 2 displays the usage of several supportive services offered to KWP participants. The Work Incentive (WIN) payment is a monthly cash benefit received after KTAP eligibility ends due to countable earned income, that continues support for families as they transition into work and reduced public benefits. Prior to modernization, WIN was \$130 per month for nine consecutive months. The modernized WIN payment is \$200 per month for twelve cumulative months, which allows individuals who do not use the full benefit at once to still be eligible for any remaining months if reapproved for KTAP. The Relocation Assistance Program (RAP) is a supportive service to assist families move to

another residence. Prior to modernization, RAP was limited to \$500 of moving expenses and was only allowed to escape domestic violence or for verified employment attainment or retention. Post modernization, RAP was increased to \$1500 and expanded to cover a housing crisis, to prevent eviction or establish a home if unhoused, and is allowable every twelve months. Families can receive RAP to pay for security deposits, rent payments, utility set up and payment, and other goods and services needed to maintain or establish a residence, which provides stability to the entire family. Vehicle Repair supportive services, which are used for vehicle repairs, maintenance, and administrative costs (registration, taxes, insurance) for a vehicle owned and used by the KWP participant, was limited to \$1500 per family and was increased to \$3000 per family. Figure 3 displays transportation assistance supportive service. This is paid to participants prospectively to assist in travel costs including gas, bus, other public transport, or any additional means of travel to an activity or to prepare for an activity. Prior to modernization, the maximum amount of transportation assistance was \$200 per month. This was increased to \$300 per month after modernization.

| State Fiscal Year | Total KTAP Cases | Total Children | Total Adults |
|-------------------|------------------|----------------|--------------|
| 2020 | 166,097 | 318,377 | 58,228 |
| 2021 | 141,845 | 278,372 | 49,539 |
| 2022 | 124,286 | 214,172 | 40,512 |
| 2023 | 120,317 | 200,748 | 41,046 |
| 2024 | 154,742 | 265,377 | 79,451 |

Figure 1

| State Fiscal Year | WIN | RAP | Vehicle Repair |
|-------------------|-------|-----|----------------|
| 2020 | 2,154 | 109 | 2,381 |
| 2021 | 1,142 | 101 | 958 |
| 2022 | 799 | 103 | 909 |
| 2023 | 1,121 | 119 | 1,565 |
| 2024 | 1,883 | 145 | 3,272 |

Figure 2

| State Fiscal Year | Number of Transportation Payments |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2020 | 24,524 |
| 2021 | 8,737 |
| 2022 | 7,374 |
| 2023 | 13,589 |
| 2024 | 35,738 |

Figure 3

As a pilot state, DCBS will build on the success of modernization of the program, testing enhanced engagement with families in determining their unique needs, connecting them with supportive services, and measuring statewide increases in family income and well-being outcomes to determine success of the program. DCBS will engage individuals who have been or are currently served by the KTAP program in the design of practice and policy changes to achieve these outcomes while addressing the benefits cliff.

Theory of Change

While Kentucky’s TANF caseload has grown and more families are receiving improved benefits, activities for work eligible adults to meet their participation requirements have remained the same. Educational opportunities are limited and other activities to prepare for work are similarly limited as to what may be considered countable for the WPR. KWP participants often need foundational activities, such as mental health counseling, domestic violence counseling, or

adult education including English as a Second Language courses, beyond the timeframe they may be considered countable to gain the basis for other lasting activities. While these activities are currently allowable, participants are often rushed through these foundational activities or may be required to complete hours in another countable activity in addition to the foundational activity, to be countable in the WPR. Case Managers focus their time verifying participation in KWP activity hours on a monthly form rather than connecting with families and focusing on their unique needs for family stability and well-being, which will lead to a less transactional relationship with their participants because meeting the WPR will not take precedence over the needs of that individual and their family. If selected as a pilot state, DCBS will transform Kentucky's case management model in the KTAP program to focus on engaging with families and working to connect them with supportive services that meet their unique needs. As a result, DCBS expects to see a positive impact on overall outcomes for children and families in Kentucky.

DCBS has recognized KTAP as a vital measure to prevent child welfare involvement for families experiencing poverty. Kentucky sees this pilot as an opportunity to build on and expand the cross-system collaboration between DCBS child welfare and KTAP programs as a strategy to prevent families from becoming involved in the child welfare system. In 2022, DCBS established a new Division of Prevention and Community Well-Being (DPCW) to focus on upstream efforts for prevention and partnering with DFS on initiatives to expand those efforts. As a national leader in prevention, Kentucky continues to seek opportunities to expand both primary and secondary prevention to lower the prevalence of child abuse and neglect by assisting families with access to needed resources and supports, avoiding the trauma of a child's removal from

parents, and involvement with the child welfare system whenever possible. The visual below, Figure 4, demonstrates Kentucky’s “Roadmap to a Child and Family Well-Being System.”

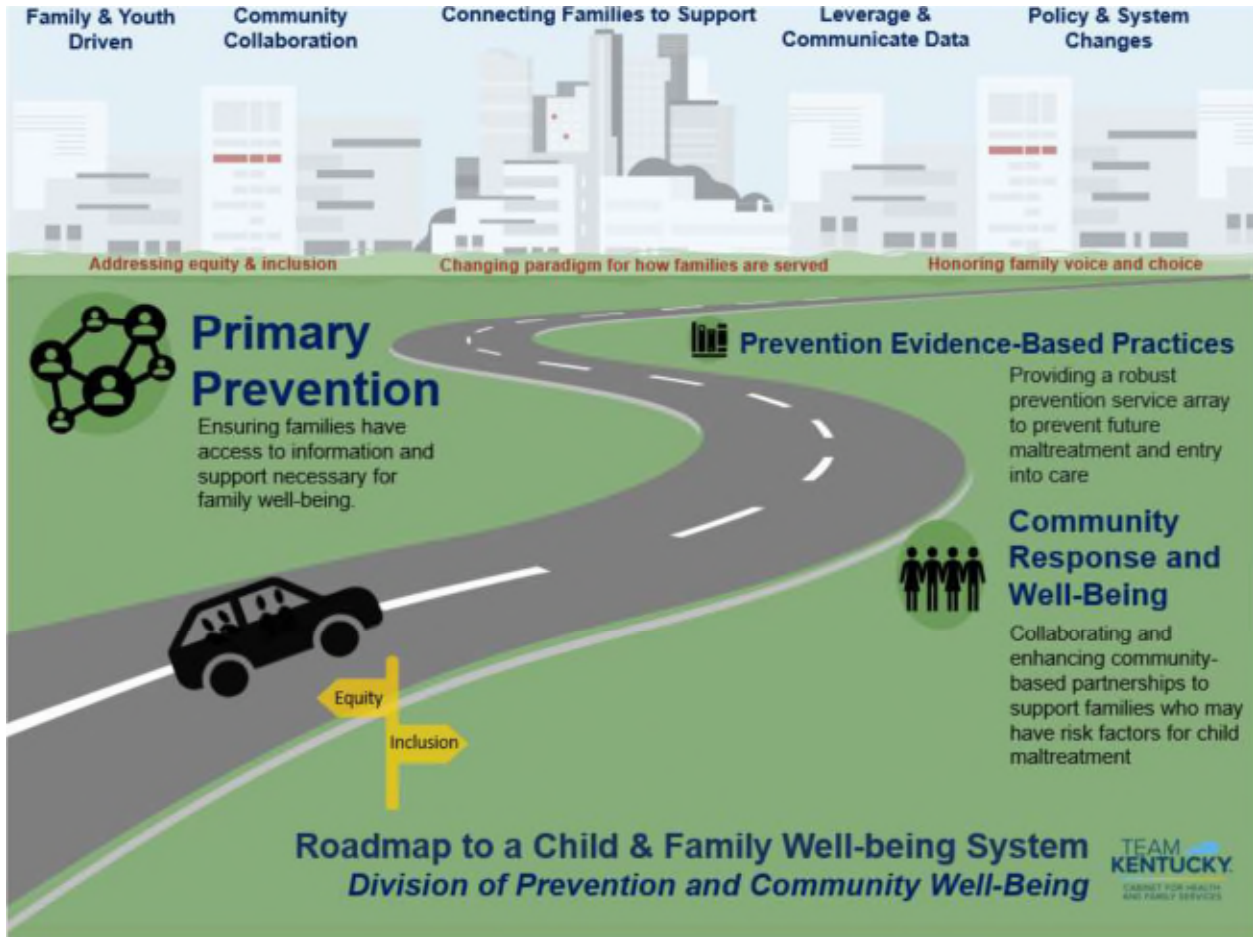


Figure 4

One overarching goal with this pilot will be to have increased intentional focus around the alignment of services being provided by DCBS KTAP and child welfare staff, ultimately promoting improved outcomes around community and family well-being.

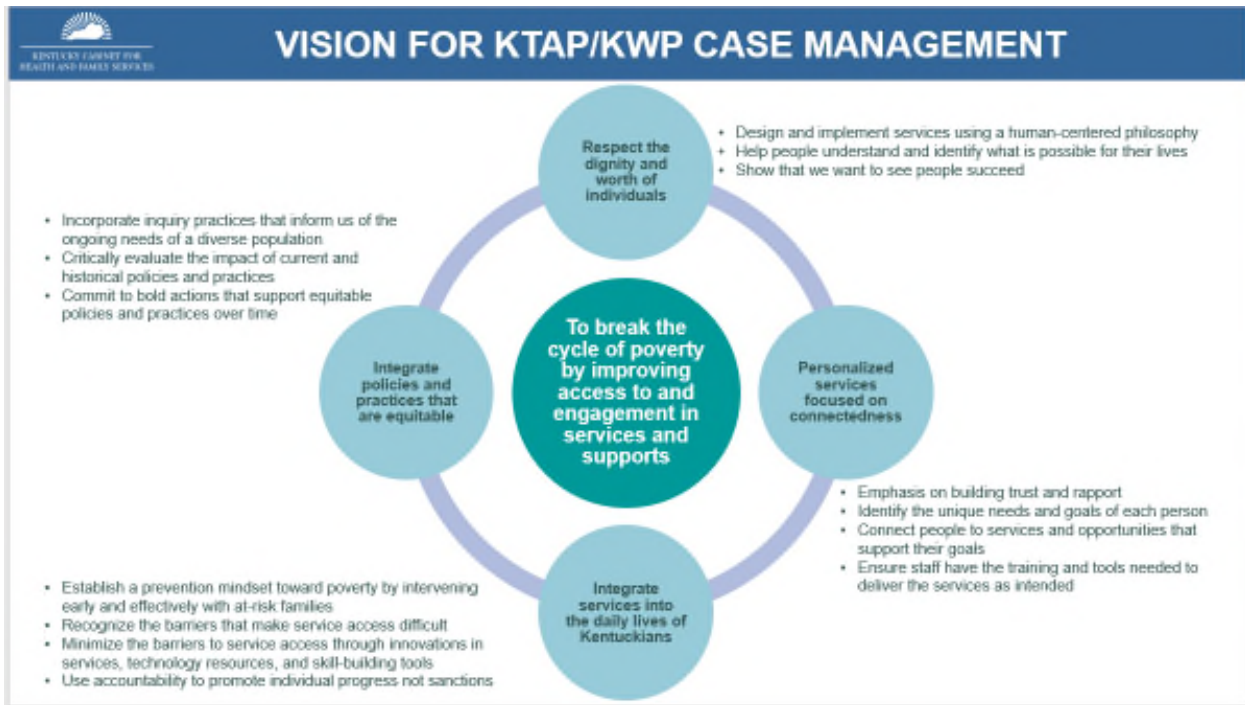
Interventions

As a pilot state, DCBS would co-design new practices and tools with former and current KTAP recipients. DCBS will focus on implementing and scaling up an Integrated Case Management (ICM) model, updating the KWP Assessment, and designing a new Transitional Assistance

Agreement focused on family strengths and needs, while expanding the opportunities for KWP participation to allow participants options based on their needs and situations, rather than pushing a certain number of hours in a limited variety of activities. The activities will be participant-driven, tailored to each individual and their family and circumstance, and will provide meaningful engagement with a Case Management team. DCBS would no longer refer to activities as core or non-core, and instead focus on activities that address participants' needs and strengths. Examples of this include removing the twelve-month restriction on vocational education so that students may continue to focus on their classwork without adding another activity and allowing both parents in a two-parent household to participate in vocational education. DCBS would work with partners who have already developed online job readiness activities to expand online options for participants without reliable transportation and expand adult education to participants who need a high school equivalency or remedial educational courses regardless of age. This will improve outcomes for parents by allowing them the opportunity to complete secondary and post-secondary education goals without the added burden of another activity simply to be countable in the WPR. DCBS developed the ICM coaching model during a previous technical assistance project (discussed below) to encourage and empower participants to set their own goals and co-create a plan to work toward those goals. ICM also allows for the cross-system collaboration between the Division of Family Support, Division of Protection and Permanency and the Division of Prevention and Community-Wellbeing. This pilot will allow systems around TANF, child welfare, and Behavioral Health (System of Care grant), to work towards system alignment to improve access for families so they are able to receive services and support when they need them.

Integrated Case Management Model

- Respect the dignity and worth of individuals.
- Provide personalized services focused on connectedness.
- Integrate services into the daily lives of Kentuckians.
- Incorporate policies and practices that are equitable.



| Activity | Length/Duration | Level of Support |
|---|--|---|
| <i>Intake/Application for KTAP with Participants</i> | Multiple time-limited touches including interview and assistance with verification | - Brief review of KWP - Brief phone call discussion during application process - Up to one-hour one-on-one meeting |
| <i>Eligibility Screening and Orientation</i> | Minimum 1.5 hours | Orientation either individually or in a group with other pilot participants |
| <i>Assessment and Referral</i> | Range from 1-4 sessions with Case Manager/ Success Coach of up to two hours each depending on participant | Deep level of support; will involve employment, academic, mental health, and barrier assessment, setting goals (participant-led) and backward planning session to break down the path to the goal step-by-step. Supportive Services are offered to address immediate needs. |
| <i>Coordinated Ongoing Case Management</i> | Repeated interactions of varying duration until goal is obtained, then recognition of accomplishment, and new goals are set. | Deep level of ongoing support for the duration of the participant's placement. Supportive Services are offered and issued as needed. |
| <i>Behavioral & Mental Health Assessment and Services</i> | Overview of resources and signs of need during orientation session; referrals to services available ongoing | Level of support will vary based on individual needs, referral to Targeted |

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| | | Assessment Program if available in the area |
| <i>Education and Training Programs</i> | Can range from 4-week Job Readiness Activity to multi-semester certificate and degree programs | Deep support available to participants through education and training providers: tutoring, advising, career counseling, and Ready to Work study program to provide wages while studying |
| <i>Work-based Learning Opportunities and Employment</i> | Can range from short-term career exploration to Work Experience or Community Service placements to subsidized or unsubsidized employment | Level of support will vary based upon placement and participant needs. When employment is obtained, explore 6-month exclusion, WIN, and Supportive Services. |

Case Managers will receive training for ICM, including a half-day of Bridges Out of Poverty¹ or similar training to build empathy and make the journey of applicants and participants more concrete for Case Managers. After eligibility for KTAP is determined and the KWP Assessment is complete, Case Managers schedule an initial KWP appointment with the participant, setting aside time to discuss immediate needs and barriers. Then, participants will set their initial goal, whether short-term or long-term, and complete backward planning to break down each step to meet the goal. Backward planning is used as a guide for individuals to determine steps to take toward their goal and the specific type of assistance they may need to reach each step. The Case Manager will make appropriate referrals and schedules additional follow up meetings to plan for the use of supportive services, adjustment to the steps and goals, and celebration of successes. This places the Case Manager in a ‘coaching’ position and sets the expectation that contact will come from the agency, rather than simply waiting for the participant to report a need. This also sets the expectation for ongoing case management and coaching, rather than Case Managers tracking paperwork each month and responding to concerns downstream.

¹ Ruby K. Payne PhD, Phillip E. Devol, Terie Dreussi-Smith

In addition to ICM coaching, DCBS will develop KWP pathways that can be used as a guide for education, employment, or barrier removal. This can alleviate some of the pressure from an individual who may not be ready to make long-term decisions while in crisis, as goal setting can be a traumatic experience for some. These pathways can mirror the SNAP Employment and Training pathways created by DCBS in previous years, which offers a variety of goals and explains steps toward those goals, and how KWP can assist individuals along the way. This can help participants make decisions whether their focus is on employment, education, or removing barriers, and will assist the Case Management team in identifying needed supports. DCBS will also focus on re-training Case Managers to act as coaches, with more focus on engagement, and explore the possibility of providing Mental Health First Aid training for all KTAP staff.

DCBS will focus on family stability and well-being outcomes in other ways, using lived experience as a guide from the onset. To do this, DCBS will create a Participant Advisory group, consisting of current and former KWP participants, that will meet virtually on an established schedule to discuss programmatic concerns and ideas. DCBS will also create a plan for local community committees or cafes, consisting of KTAP Case Managers, contracted providers, agencies, local businesses, non-profit groups, and benefit recipients, to guide local collaboration and opportunities for employment and education. This allows KWP participants to build social capital by being active and involved in decision-making in their communities. DCBS will accomplish this intervention in collaboration with Brighton Center, a community of support in Northern Kentucky. Brighton Center partners with DCBS and receives direct referrals from DCBS programs and has shown innovation in engaging participants and the community in advisory groups to build their programs.

Technical Assistance projects to leverage to develop work and well-being outcomes to support family stability

DCBS participated in a Laser TANF Learning Community in 2022, which led to the development of ICM, a coaching model of case management focuses on participant-led goal setting, a backward planning method of developing a step-by-step plan to attain goals, and an increase in engagement and follow up from the Case Manager to the family, with more emphasis on addressing needs and fewer punitive actions if the work requirement was not immediately met. This collaboration between participants and case managers built better relationships, helped participants learn the skills to set and attain goals, reinforced participants' motivation to meet their goals, and improved job satisfaction for Case Managers. ICM was piloted and implemented in one-third of Kentucky's counties, and as a pilot state, DCBS can continue to scale up and expand to the rest of the state. ICM consisted of training sessions that included Bridges Out of Poverty, which helps case management staff gain insight into the lives of participants and builds empathy, while also allowing staff autonomy to work with participants one-on-one and develop individualized plans to family stability.

Concurrently, in 2022-2023, DCBS received Technical Assistance from Third Sector to optimize the KWP participant experience by implementing staff trainings based on human-centered design, solicit feedback from KWP participants to help determine how to personalize case management and program access to increase engagement, and modify service agreements to improve community partnerships and participants' access to community resources. This project included service trials, provider interviews, observation of KWP processes in local offices, a Case Manager workshop, and a KWP participant workshop to understand lived program experience.

As a pilot state, DCBS would expand on human-centered staff training in a Case Management Conference for all Case Managers, Supervisors, and Program Specialists to emphasize the participants' experiences and re-train attendees to focus on a family's well-being rather than whether the work eligible adult meets the work participation requirement.

DCBS is now participating in the Families Are Stronger Together Learning Community (FAST LC), which examines how TANF flexibilities can be utilized to prevent families from becoming involved in the child welfare system. DCBS' Division of Family Support (DFS) and Division of Prevention and Community Well-Being (DPCW) are collaborating to increase communication and education between child welfare and KTAP staff, along with providers and lived experts, to streamline service delivery. As an FRA pilot state, DCBS would continue this work and address child welfare involvement by increasing preventative measures with evidence-based concrete supports.²

DCBS has been participating in a Learning Collaborative project, Addressing Equity in TANF Programs since March 2024. While navigating through this Learning Collaborative project DCBS has been able to lessen the barriers between employees, participants, and families, to build a stronger relationship with child welfare staff.

DCBS has requested a new technical assistance session to assist in pulling all the ideas, data, and innovations from the previous TA projects together and making a cohesive plan for

² *Chapin Hall, Providing Flexible Funds for Concrete Supports to Families as a Child Welfare Prevention Strategy*

implementation. This TA will also include discussion sessions with the other states in our region to make the most of the data and work.

How Pilot Interventions will lead to Family Stability and Well-Being

These interventions will lead to increased earnings, increased job retention, increased family income, and increased family stability by allowing families to be self-directed and focus on their specific, individualized goals. The new focus will allow Case Managers to track progress rather than participation hours. Individuals are not motivated to meet hours for the WPR or even to avoid sanction. Motivation comes from autonomy to set one's own goals. When barriers can be addressed and preparation work can be completed, individuals can move more easily to work and are able to retain employment.³ DCBS expects to see a measurable increase in employment and retention in the 5-year pilot period if selected.

Family Stability and Well-Being Outcomes

If selected as a pilot state, DCBS will implement interventions with the goal of increasing whole family income through employment. The measures will include the following:

1. Employment Rate – 2nd Quarter After Exit: the percentage of work-eligible individuals who are in unsubsidized employment during the 2nd quarter after exiting the program.
2. Median Earnings – 2nd Quarter After Exit: the median level of earnings of work-eligible individuals, who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after the exit; and
3. Median Earnings – 4th Quarter After Exit: the median level of earnings of work-eligible individuals, who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after the exit.

To calculate these work outcome measures, DCBS will submit Social Security Numbers (SSNs) of all work-eligible individuals who exit TANF in each quarter on a quarterly basis. ACF will then

³ *Chapin Hall, The Potential of Motivational Interviewing*

match those SSNs with quarterly wage records in the National Directory of New Hires (NDNH) to obtain records from two quarters after the individual's exit through four quarters after the individual's exit.

DCBS will focus on employment skills gain as the additional family stability and well-being measure in the economic domain. Currently, Kentucky has a caseload of 6,887 KWP participants, with 4,702 participants placed in an educational or employment skills activity. With the interventions described in the Theory of Change, DCBS will be able to focus on completion of educational goals, as well as increases in employment skills, to grow opportunities and income for KWP participants. DCBS has access to data from the Kentucky Center for Statistics (KYSTATS) that projects the need for skilled workers in the areas of health care support, transportation and material moving, and community and social services, among others, with wages above the median annual income for the state. DCBS will also continue a robust partnership with Kentucky Community and Technical College Systems (KCTCS), which uses the same data to develop curriculum to prepare students, including over one thousand KTAP participants in the Ready to Work Program, for these careers. Ready to Work (RTW) is a proven work-study program that has supported thousands of KWP participants over a 20+ year DCBS partnership. RTW coordinators in each of the sixteen colleges support KWP participants as they balance family, work, and school while participating in work study opportunities that do not reduce certain public benefits. The RTW coordinators also provide advocacy and mentoring, access to daycare and transportation assistance, and employment skills training.

DCBS will continue to partner with each of our "Big Five" contracted providers across the state to assist KWP participants in employment skills training, placement in work experience

activities, and subsidized and unsubsidized employment on a direct referral basis. These five providers include Big Sandy Area Development District, Northern Kentucky Area Development District, Community Action Kentucky, Audubon Area Community Services, and Kentuckiana Works. These providers are an essential part of the Kentucky Works Program and will support the pilot initiatives by having more options for placements in local communities and are further discussed in the Collaboration and Partnerships section.

If selected, DCBS will implement measures to increase family stability in the community domain by reducing involvement in child welfare for families experiencing poverty. DCBS will utilize the expertise and data from DPCW and the Division of Protection and Permanency (DPP) to increase knowledge about the programs for staff and the community, to reduce fear and stigma around help-seeking, and to provide concrete supports for families experiencing poverty. In a partnership with Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky, DCBS launched Lean on Me Kentucky, a toolkit developed with input from individuals who have experienced system involvement, meant to help people and organizations to become effective community supporters. These measures are supported by research from Chapin Hall, which explains “The central role of economic insecurity and material hardship as drivers of child welfare system involvement underscores the importance of addressing the concrete needs of families. A growing body of evidence demonstrates the effects of a broad array of economic and concrete supports to reduce risk for child maltreatment and child welfare involvement. This evidence includes providing flexible funds to meet families’ concrete needs, which has shown promising results in preventing

subsequent child welfare involvement.”⁴ Currently, Kentucky DPP reports there are 8,141 children in out of home care and seeks to reduce that number in partnership with DFS and DPCW.

Service Population

The total population in Kentucky is 4.502 million people, with 704,758 citizens living in poverty. This poverty number includes about 22% percent of Kentucky’s children – about one in five, which is the sixth highest rate in the nation.⁵ Kentucky has a labor force of 2.011 million, with unemployment and educational attainment varying widely across the different regions of the state. Statewide, the unemployment rate is 3.9%, with 11% of working age adults having no high school diploma, 57% having some college, and 34% having an associate degree or higher; however, the unemployment rate in Eastern Kentucky, specifically, is 5.7%, and this is where most of the adults with no high school diploma live.⁶

Much of Kentucky is rural, and participants report barriers specific to small, rural communities that include a lack of public transportation, lack of childcare options, lack of mental health services, and lack of KWP-approved activities. DCBS will use these reported barriers to develop policies around activities and will utilize local Case Managers, Program Specialists, and contracted providers to explore options in local communities.

⁴ *Providing Flexible Funds for Concrete Supports to Families as a Child Welfare Prevention Strategy, 2024*

⁵ *KYSTATS Workforce Overview Report for Kentucky Regions, Demographics, June 2024, & 2021 census report*

⁶ *KYSTATS Workforce Overview Report for Kentucky Regions, June 2024*

Kentucky has invested in developing a wide range of resources across the state to promote education and thriving for families, including a robust community and technical college system which includes adult education, community action agencies, training and career centers, and numerous state colleges and universities. DCBS plans to utilize these community resources and other partners for outreach about KTAP and the interventions, to potentially reach not only families new to KTAP, but also families who may have received KTAP in the past and struggled to participate because of the limitations imposed by the WPR or lack of engaging case management. DCBS is also interested in developing methods to target families who are referred from prevention programs such as alternative response, an approach for responding to reports to the child welfare agency that do not indicate serious harm or require an urgent response. Community response pilots, as part of the OPT-In initiative, are being implemented in ten counties to intervene before a family becomes involved with child welfare for reports that do not meet criteria for abuse or neglect. Cultural competency will be addressed with training of staff and by incorporating lived experts into the culture of DCBS. For many years, families who became involved with child welfare and public assistance have been stigmatized with words like “neglectful,” “lazy,” or “bad.” Often, those families have avoided seeking help because of that stigma, and the fear around whether asking for help will cause their children to be removed, their lives to be surveilled, or any benefits they receive to be reduced or discontinued. DCBS is committed to reducing this stigma and fear; DFS, DPP, and DPCW are actively collaborating on educational materials for staff, individuals, and communities to combat this perception of both the agency and those it serves. DCBS is developing a “WEP to Work” program that will place KWP participants in local offices to share their lived experiences while learning valuable skills

that lead to potential recruitment as a DCBS employee. Not only will this support DCBS' recruitment of talented employees, but it will also bring more people with lived experience into DCBS' workforce.

Implementation Capacity

The pilot interventions are not planned to directly affect any eligibility criteria for KTAP; however, it is expected to increase engagement with families. There are Case Managers in every county statewide to implement these strategies. Case Managers are equipped with laptops to travel to meetings or work from home, and the refocus on ICM will allow KTAP calls to be routed to local Case Managers rather than statewide. This will allow for relationship-building and Case Managers will be able to follow up with their participants more easily. No additional funding is expected, and TANF funds will not be adjusted.

DCBS has the opportunity and capacity to implement the interventions because of the relationship between Division of Family Support (DFS) staff and Division of Service Regions (DSR) staff. DFS creates the policies and procedures, while DSR are the field staff who provide direct services to families. Because DFS and DSR are already in constant communication, both virtually and in-person, DCBS is uniquely situated to make wholesale changes to KWP. DFS holds trainings, touchpoint meetings, and policy panels to communicate policy to staff throughout the year and plans for a Case Management Conference to train new ideas for interviewing, ICM, and resilience. DSR staff hold regular regional Case Manager's meetings to address errors, explain policy, and hear concerns from Case Managers, which DFS attends as support. DCBS can utilize these strong relationships to implement the interventions successfully. Including local Case Managers, Supervisors, and Program Specialists in the advisory groups to make these

decisions ongoing will also support buy-in from staff, who report wanting to be more involved in policy development.

Collaboration and Partnerships

In addition to using data from previous technical assistance projects to incorporate lived experience, DCBS will expand the current collaboration with Brighton Center, whose mission is to create opportunities for individuals and families to reach self-sufficiency through family support services, education, employment, and leadership. Brighton Center achieves this by providing critical programs and services that help the community grow and thrive. Brighton Center is a contracted partner with DCBS and receives direct referrals for KWP participants and families involved with child welfare and prevention in Northern Kentucky. Brighton Center is developing a Community Well-Being matrix (Figure 5) that will allow for the assessment of the well-being of the community, across multiple indicators that are meaningful to families. This matrix was developed using lived experience from families who participate in Brighton Center programs, which often includes KWP participants. DCBS is excited to learn from Brighton Center and weave lived experts into our policy-making decisions.

Community Well-Being Matrix

| | Prevention System Support <i>Is the prevention system....</i> | | | | | | |
|---|---|------------------------------------|---|---|--|--|--|
| | Accessible | Visible | Culturally Relevant | Normalizing & Validating | Equitable | Needed by & Useful to Families | Competent |
| Indicators of Community Well-Being: <i>A community with strong well-being is....</i> | <i>Service locations, hours open, wait time, etc. work for families</i> | <i>Easy to find & navigate</i> | <i>Representation & inclusive norms among providers</i> | <i>Receipt of support is not stigmatizing</i> | <i>Available regardless of race, ethnicity, gender identity, age, etc.</i> | <i>Services fit and meet the needs desired by families</i> | <i>Providers are trained, have lived expertise and perspective</i> |
| Happy and Emotionally Healthy <i>Residents find enjoyment in their life & community</i> | | | | | | | |
| Culturally Representative: <i>Representation of the customs, values, and worldviews of various and diverse cultures</i> | | | | | | | |
| Socially Diverse and Connected: <i>A widespread sense of communal trust; how people relate to one another and are connected</i> | | | | | | | |

Figure 5

DCBS partners with the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) which consists of sixteen community and technical colleges across the state that provide paid TANF-funded work study opportunities for KWP participants in the Ready to Work program, as well as adult education services. KCTCS has been a vital part of KWP for many years and supported students with online options to continue being paid during the COVID-19 pandemic. KCTCS provides DCBS with data concerning success of students who complete courses of study and occupational outlooks for those industries in Kentucky. KCTCS is eager to continue supporting DCBS in the future and will be an integral part of the educational interventions if Kentucky is selected as a pilot state.

DCBS utilizes the contracted services of five providers to assist KWP participants in employment skills training, placement in work experience activities, and subsidized and unsubsidized employment on a direct referral basis. These five providers include:

- Big Sandy Area Development District, which covers 56 counties in the central and eastern parts of the state, and served 1664 KWP participants in SFY 2024
- Northern Kentucky Area Development District, which covers 12 counties in the northern part of the state, and served 399 KWP participants in SFY 2024
- Central Kentucky Community Action Council, which covers 17 counties in the central part of the state, and served 295 KWP participants in SFY 2024
- Audubon Area Community Services, which covers 34 counties in the western part of the state, and served 1229 KWP participants in SFY 2024
- Kentuckiana Works, which covers Jefferson County in the Louisville area, and served 1780 KWP participants in SFY 2024

Another indispensable partnership DCBS will continue to utilize is the University of Kentucky Targeted Assessment Program (UKTAP) which operates in 35 of the state's 120 counties. UKTAP provides comprehensive assessment and intensive case management services to parents who are involved in the state's child welfare and KTAP systems. The goal of the program is to help participants overcome barriers to self-sufficiency and family safety by focusing on mental health, substance use, intimate partner violence, and learning disabilities or deficits. Through motivational interviewing and strengths-based intensive case management, UKTAP staff prepare participants for treatment, refer them to community-based services and treatment programs, and facilitate their follow through with referrals and services.

DCBS partners with the Kentucky Center for Statistics (KYSTATS) for data showing post-secondary education attainment, workforce data and trends, TANF data, future skills projections, and other data that will help guide interventions toward employment skills attainment in high-demand industries with higher income potential. We will also use this data to assist in tracking the success of interventions.

FRA Pilot Federal Implementation and Outcomes Study

Kentucky DCBS is willing to participate in the FRA pilot's federal implementation and outcomes study if chosen as a pilot state. DCBS is excited to participate and hear from other states about initiatives and lessons learned and is looking forward to the robust technical assistance provided by ACF to support states' participation in the study.